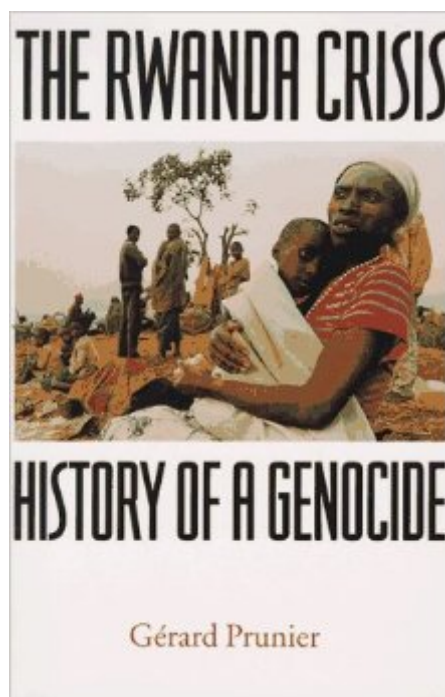


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# The Rwanda Crisis: History Of A Genocide



## Synopsis

In the spring of 1994 the tiny African nation of Rwanda exploded onto the international media stage, as internal strife reached genocidal proportions. But the horror that unfolded before our eyes had been building steadily for years before it captured the attention of the world. In *The Rwanda Crisis*, journalist and Africa scholar Gérard Prunier provides a historical perspective that Western readers need to understand how and why the brutal massacres of 800,000 Rwandese came to pass. Prunier shows how the events in Rwanda were part of a deadly logic, a plan that served central political and economic interests, rather than a result of ancient tribal hatreds—a notion often invoked by the media to dramatize the fighting. *The Rwanda Crisis* makes great strides in dispelling the racist cultural myths surrounding the people of Rwanda, views propagated by European colonialists in the nineteenth century and carved into "history" by Western influence. Prunier demonstrates how the struggle for cultural dominance and subjugation among the Hutu and Tutsi—the central players in the recent massacres—was exploited by racially obsessed Europeans. He shows how Western colonialists helped to construct a Tutsi identity as a superior racial type because of their distinctly "non-Negro" features in order to facilitate greater control over the Rwandese. Expertly leading readers on a journey through the troubled history of the country and its surroundings, Prunier moves from the pre-colonial Kingdom of Rwanda, through German and Belgian colonial regimes, to the 1973 coup. The book chronicles the developing refugee crisis in Rwanda and neighboring Uganda in the 1970s and 1980s and offers the most comprehensive account available of the manipulations of popular sentiment that led to the genocide and the events that have followed. In the aftermath of this devastating tragedy, *The Rwanda Crisis* is the first clear-eyed analysis available to American readers. From the massacres to the subsequent cholera epidemic and emerging refugee crisis, Prunier details the horrifying events of recent years and considers prospects for the future of Rwanda.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This book has plenty of information about Rwanda and the 1994 genocide there. Yes, the book may appear anti-Hutu. But that is because so many of the Hutus were guilty of genocide. The fact that not all Tutsis have always been angels does not change that. Rwanda is a country of a little over 10,000 square miles, with several million people. At the beginning of 1994, about ten percent of its people were Tutsis and almost all of the rest were Hutus. There were about 900,000 Tutsis. In the space of a few weeks, 800,000 of the Tutsis were brutally murdered, many of them by their neighbors, who generally used machetes to slaughter them. This was a carefully planned extermination. There was a long period of incitement. And even the word "inyenzi" (literally, "cockroaches") used by Hutu extremists to describe Tutsis started as a reference to violent armed men who tended to move at night. It was not merely a term of derision, but also one which helped produce a reaction of fear that encouraged the massacres. The author explains that had it not been for the success of a Tutsi army in eventually (but too late) taking the capital city, the leaders of the genocide probably would have gotten away with it completely. There might have been a brief and partial UN boycott, with France discreetly violating it, followed by a restoration of international ties with the government. The differences between Tutsis and Hutus had made a big impression on European colonialists a century earlier. The Tutsis were usually considerably taller and thinner than the Hutus. The Tutsis typically had narrower noses and lighter skins as well. Europeans had put Tutsis in control of the land in spite of the fact that the Hutus were a big majority.

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